

Program Notice

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ESTIMATING MYCOTOXIN TEST RESULTS

1. PURPOSE

This Program Notice is issued to announce a policy change in the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) mycotoxin testing program regarding the testing and certification of mycotoxin test results that exceed the range of the approved test kits.

2. BACKGROUND

The FGIS mycotoxin (aflatoxin, DON, fumonisin) testing program is designed to provide the grain industry with results that are both timely and accurate, and flexible in the area of certification. Standard certification procedures for quantitative testing require test results that are greater than the conformance limit (i.e., the upper testing limit of the test kit) of the test kit to be certified as a result that exceeds the limit. For example, a quantitative DON test result of 6.7 parts per million (ppm) obtained from a test kit with a conformance limit of 5 ppm is certified as "DON exceeds 5 ppm."

Optional certification procedures allow the applicant to request an "estimated" result (i.e., the displayed result) or request a supplemental analysis where the sample extract is diluted to obtain a result within the limit of the test kit. Typically, applicants defer to the estimation option when results exceed the test kit limitations. Estimated results provide the applicant with a "ball park" figure of mycotoxin concentration that is usually sufficient for grain segregation purposes.

Recently we compared "estimated" test results against actual test results obtained with a supplemental analysis and determined that the estimated results usually predict results that underestimate the amount of the mycotoxin present. In light of this information, we have decided to discontinue the optional estimation certification procedure from all of our mycotoxin testing programs.

3. POLICY

Effective immediately, FGIS and official agency personnel will no longer certify any mycotoxin test result that exceeds the conformance limit of an FGIS-approved test kit with an "estimated" value.

Mycotoxin test results that exceed the limitation of the test kit must be certified using the standard "exceeds" statement (e.g., DON exceeds 5 ppm) as found in the appropriate handbook/directive, unless the applicant specifically requests a supplemental analysis for "actual" results.

4. FILING INSTRUCTIONS

File a copy of this Program Notice with the appropriate handbook/directive. The Aflatoxin and DON handbooks, as well as the Fumonisin Directive, will be updated in the near future to reflect this policy.

5. QUESTIONS

Direct any questions concerning this policy to the Policies and Procedures Branch at (202) 720-0252.

/s/ David Orr

David Orr, Director
Field Management Division